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ANNUAL MEETINGS

The next annual meeting of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology will be held in Baltimore within the month of October next. Announcement of exact date will be made later.

The American Prison Association will hold its next annual meeting in Jacksonville, Florida, some time in November, 1921.

EDITORIALS

PAROLE: MORE LIGHT WANTED

What is the system of parole worth? There is only one method by which to settle this perennial question and to settle it right. Take a complete list of all persons paroled in a given state during a period of several years and trace out each one's history in detail to the present. The group that is selected for such treatment should belong to a period several years past, so that their history may be found not only for the period during which they were on parole and consequently under the surveillance of parole agents, but for a considerable time—three to five years—immediately following the expiration of this period and their discharge from custody. Such an investigation as I propose would cost something in time and money, but there would certainly be compensating advantages arising from it. At least we would arrive at definitely positive or negative conclusions on the mooted question of the curative value of the current method of administration of parole. More than this, I believe such an intensive and extensive investigation as I have in mind would tell us all, positively, supporters and doubters alike, whether we want the parole system at all, and if so on what terms.

When the friends of the parole system say (as they all do) that in the neighborhood of 85 per cent of prisoners make good on parole, they are undoubtedly correct; and this in itself is a good record. There is no reliable information, however, as to what happens after parole has expired. The more permanent curative value of the system is undetermined, and this is what we want to get at.

Furthermore there can be no question whatsoever that, on the whole, at least in Indiana and Illinois, the average time per prisoner

spent in penal institutions has been considerably longer during the years since the adoption of the parole system than was the case prior to that time when the definite sentence system was in vogue.

Facts though these are, they do not satisfy the doubter because we are dealing with average which, he thinks, may *possibly* cover up some cases that it would be disagreeable to face. There is that possibility. The sort of investigation I propose will have to be undertaken and completed before these questions can be set at rest.

Incidentally there is no longer any excuse for the man who persists in talking about *parole* when he means *probation* by the court.

ROBERT H. GAULT.

AMERICAN POLICE SYSTEMS

Mr. Raymond B. Fosdick, in "American Police Systems."¹ affords a picture of American police conditions in contrast with corresponding European affairs, which he described in his earlier volume, entitled "European Police Systems." The comparison is much to the disadvantage of our American police.

In the course of eleven chapters and seven charts, Mr. Fosdick discusses practically every phase of police work, and he does it all in a literary style that will go a long way toward commending his book to the reading public. Without this quality the book would lose a great advantage as an instrument for popular education in a field that has been all but wholly neglected by American students. Until this book came from the press we have had no comprehensive nor intimate view of the American police.

In his opening chapter on "The American Problem," the author sets us on our guard against a disposition to criticize our own forces unfairly when we contrast our unhappy state with the greatly more favorable conditions in Europe. Such a heterogeneous population as ours, e. g., is altogether unknown in England and on the continent. This is only one of several crucial differences. Taken all in all, Mr. Fosdick's judgment is that the Metropolitan Police of London, almost perfect though it is in its own place, would fail in New York or in Chicago.

New laws, systems, organizations alone will never lead our American cities out of their morass of police inefficiency. The interference of "politics" in its worst sense and the inertia of the system of

¹Publications of the Bureau of Social Hygiene. The Century Co., N. Y., 1920, pp. 408.